

# ***News from the Wyoming Department of Health***

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## **Regular Mammograms Can Help Save Women's Lives**

*October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

Wyoming Department of Health representatives are reminding Wyoming women to keep on track with needed, regular mammograms that can save lives.

“Routine screening for breast cancer with mammography can reduce the risk of premature death” said Dr. Brent Sherard, Wyoming Department of Health director and state health officer. “Early detection means increased treatment options and better chances for survival.”

The most recent data from the Wyoming Cancer Surveillance Registry showed that 309 Wyoming women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in 2007 with 64 deaths.

The American Cancer Society recommends yearly mammograms starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as a woman is in good health. A clinical breast exam should be part of a periodic health exam about every three years for women in their 20s and 30s and every year for women 40 and older. “Women should also know how their breasts normally feel and report any breast changes promptly to their healthcare provider,” said Denise Padilla, professional development and recruitment coordinator with the Wyoming Department of Health’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

All women are at risk for breast cancer. Factors affecting a woman’s risk of developing breast cancer including getting older, family history, personal history of breast cancer, not giving birth to children or giving birth to your first child in your 30s or 40s, a genetic predisposition, menstruation before age 12, menopause after age 50, and obesity, especially after menopause.

According to the Wyoming Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Wyoming’s mammogram rate of 67.2 percent among women 40 and older has been consistently below the national median of 76 percent.

In 2008, mammogram screening rates were lowest among Wyoming women who had no check-up in the past two years, no healthcare visit in the past year, women with any health access issue, working poor, single women, women unable to work and current smokers.

The Wyoming Department of Health’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, also known as Women’s Health Source, pays for breast screening and diagnostic tests for women who do not have health insurance, are low income, and are age 50-64 or younger if they have an abnormal breast exam. For more information, call 1-800-264-1296.

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